



## OFFICIAL BUSINESS MEALS (NON-TRAVEL)

**Policy Title:** Official Business Meals (Non-Travel)

**Policy Type:** Administrative

**Policy Number:** 41-02 (2014)

**Approval Date:** 12/16/2021

**Responsible Office:** Office of the Controller/Financial Services

**Responsible Executive:** Vice President for Finance and Administration

**Applies to:** All University employees and, as appropriate, non-state employees affiliated with the University.

### POLICY STATEMENT

Norfolk State University purchases must be considered essential to the operation of the agency and in support of the agency's mission to justify the use of State funds.

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### DEFINITIONS

**Business Meal:** Meals provided to individuals who are not in travel status, but are on official business.

**Non-state employee:** Any individual who is not employed by the State, but who is conducting State business. This includes the members of boards, authorities, or commissions.

**State Employee:** Any elected, appointed, classified, or non-classified employee of the



Commonwealth.

## **CONTACT(S)**

The University Controller officially interprets this policy. The Vice President for Finance and Administration is responsible for obtaining approval for any revisions as required by BOV Policy # 01 (2014) *Creating and Maintaining Policies* <https://www.nsu.edu/policy/bov-01.aspx> through the appropriate governance structures. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the University Controller.

## **STAKEHOLDER(S):**

University Community

## **OFFICIAL BUSINESS MEALS (NON-TRAVEL) POLICY CONTENTS**

Official business meals must involve substantive and bona fide business discussions and must be recommended for payment by the department head and approved by the Agency Head/Designee. A group conducting a meeting or function may charge meals to public funds if such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting or function and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting or function participants. Business meals may not be charged to public funds when no need exists for continuity of a meeting or function. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost and not an appropriate charge to public funds.

**Examples of agency-sponsored event expenses incurred which do not clearly support the agency mission and will not be reimbursed from State funds include:**

1. Holiday parties or decorations,
2. Alcoholic beverages,
3. Charitable contributions, and
4. Gifts and flowers.

This policy does not apply to business meals reimbursed from Discretionary Funds.

### **Purpose**

This statement provides guidelines for conducting official business meals.

### **1. General**

- a. Authorized official business meals are reimbursed based on actual costs incurred up to the amount per the CAPP Manual and shown for the applicable meal in the M&IE Rate Table. These rates can also be found on the General Services Administration (GSA) website (see links in Related Documents below). The M&IE rate used shall correspond to the location in which the official business meal was taken for in-state, out-of-state, and foreign travel (excluding the incidental allowance).



- b. Meal per diem rates on the individual meal rate table are to be applied to all business meal functions, on and off campus, including University visitors, such as visiting faculty, job candidates/interviewees, etc. These rates also apply to all business meals provided through the University food services contractor.
- c. The Agency Head/Designee *may* authorize business meal reimbursements up to 50% over the applicable per-diem guidelines with sufficient justification. Business meal reimbursements above 50% over the applicable per diem guideline *are not permitted*.
- d. Generally, meal expenses must involve an overnight stay to qualify for reimbursement. In these instances, the traveler must adhere to the travel regulations outlined in the travel policy and procedures for meal reimbursement and will be reimbursed using the applicable M&IE rate table for the location they are staying at. Individuals in travel status may occasionally attend meals that qualify as business meals. Individuals in travel status who attend a business meal, with the appropriate documentation and approval discussed earlier, will be reimbursed for the cost of the business meal. However, the per diem allowance applicable to that business meal must be clearly excluded from the daily reimbursement amount. In no case, will an individual in a travel status receive both per diem and reimbursement for the same meal.
- e. Expenses of a university employee's spouse involved with an interview process or other business meeting are not reimbursable from public funds.
- f. Business meals must be approved in the financial system in advance by the Agency Head/Designee.
- g. Official business meals are state sales tax exempt per the Department of Taxation's Tax Bulletin <https://www.tax.virginia.gov/laws-rules-decisions/tax-bulletins/16-3>.

## 2. Documentation required for reimbursement/payment of business meals charges

- a. Charges for dining in the Norfolk area or other official station are to be reimbursed on a Travel Voucher form. **Itemized** receipts are required for reimbursement of business meals expenses. Attach a completed copy of the Business Meal Certification form (see attached) which includes the approved Purchase Order number, list of names of all meal participants along with association, and justification showing the business necessity of the event. Initials of the representatives are not sufficient to document the attendees at the meeting.
- b. For functions held through the University food services contractor, provide the contractor with a completed and authorized Business Meal Certification form (signed by appropriate



designee) which includes the purchase order number (made payable to the contractor), and a list of names of all meal participants. Without the Business Meal Certification form and the Purchase Order number, the food service contractor will not be reimbursed for the charges and, therefore, will not perform the services requested. After the completion of the event, the food service contractor will forward the original invoice with the Original Business Meal Certification form to the Accounts Payable office for payment processing.

### **3. Timeframe to submit request for reimbursement**

It is critical that all requests for reimbursement for business meals be submitted within five (5) business days of the conclusion of the event in order to allow time for processing and payment in a timely fashion.

\*Note: the GSA rates are generally published for the Federal fiscal year, which runs from October- 1 – September 30 annually.

## **EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE**

The Office of the Controller shall make available to all affected parties training on the requirement of this policy. To ensure conformity of the requirement of this policy, the Office of the Vice President of Finance will monitor for compliance with this policy annually.

## **PUBLICATION**

This policy shall be widely published and distributed to the University community. To ensure timely publication and distribution thereof, the Responsible Office will make every effort to:

- Communicate the policy in writing electronic or otherwise, to the University community within 14 days of approval;
- Submit the policy for inclusion in the online Policy Library within 14 days of approval;
- Post the policy on the appropriate SharePoint Site and/or Website; and
- Educate and train all stakeholders and appropriate audiences on the policy's content as necessary. Failure to meet publication requirements does not invalidate this policy.

## **REVIEW SCHEDULE**

(List the following items)

- Next Scheduled Review 08/21/2024
- Approval by, date: President, 09/24/2014



- Revision History: 08/01/2007; 09/24/2014; 06/01/2016, 08/01/2017; 08/21/2018; 12/16/2021
- Supersedes: 41.211 Official Business Meals (Non-Travel) Policies & Procedures

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

1. University State Travel Policies  
<https://www.nsu.edu/policy/admin-41-01.aspx>
2. GSA.gov- Per diem Rates by State- CONUS- Continental United States  
[Per Diem Rates | GSA](#)
3. GSA.gov- Per diem Rates International Counties- OCONUS – Outside Continental US Per Diem Breakdown of Meal and Incidentals for all OCONUS Rates  
[Per Diem Rates Query \(dod.mil\)](#)
4. Per diem Calculator- Continental United States Only- Lodging and Meals Calculation for Each Travel Day [Federal GSA Per Diem Calculator](#)
5. Commonwealth of Virginia State Travel Policy CAPP Manual #20335  
[http://www.doa.virginia.gov/reference/CAPP/CAPP\\_Topics/20335-20215.pdf](http://www.doa.virginia.gov/reference/CAPP/CAPP_Topics/20335-20215.pdf)

## **FORMS**

1. Business Meal Certification Form  
(MY NSU>Faculty/Staff Resources> Accounts Payable>Documents & Forms)